

Advancing Opportunities for Children, Families and Communities: Equity, Leadership, and Early Childhood Systems Development

Governor's Early Childhood Advisory Council Meeting,
March 3, 2021



The BUILD Initiative

- Provides **tailored and timely technical** assistance to state agency leaders and the Leadership Team as defined in partner states.
 - State **liaison who is an expert in early childhood systems building** and, other experts in the field, on the range of the early childhood system.
 - Supports state agencies and division or departmental leaders working to **ensure diversity and equity in all aspects** of early childhood systems building.
 - Supports states in **using the qualitative and quantitative data to inform and drive decision making**, quality improvement, removal of barriers, and monitoring and distribution of state resources.
- Informs and influences state and national conversations and policy decisions by highlighting emerging issues, innovative approaches, best practices, and results from the field.
 - Facilitates learning communities that share the latest research and promising practices.
 - Serves as a knowledge broker by shining a light on promising early childhood systems efforts and highlighting new ideas and successful innovations.

Goals

- To **offer a framework** for advancing equity for young children and their families.
- To support the **integration equity as a verb** into program, policies and practice efforts in health care and public health, early learning, economic support e.g., employment, housing.



Commitments to the Equity Conversation

- Critical Thinking—look for what challenges your thinking rather than what confirms you are right.
- Humility—come as learner, not expert.
- Dialogue—think and make meaning together.
- Hope—believe that a better future is possible.

Source: “Courageous Conversations About Race: A Field Guide for Achieving Equity in Schools” (Chapter 4 pp. 58-65); Glenn Singleton and Curtis Linton. Corwin Press, 2006



Framework

Diversity, Inclusion and Equity



<https://medium.com/greater-good-studio/tips-to-operationalize-diversity-equity-inclusion-practices-in-your-non-profit-organization-ed2c7c09a7cf>

HISTORY

INTERNAL

Bias
Privilege
Internalized
Racism

EXTERNAL

Interpersonal
Institutional
Structural

**POWER
AND
ECONOMICS**

CULTURE

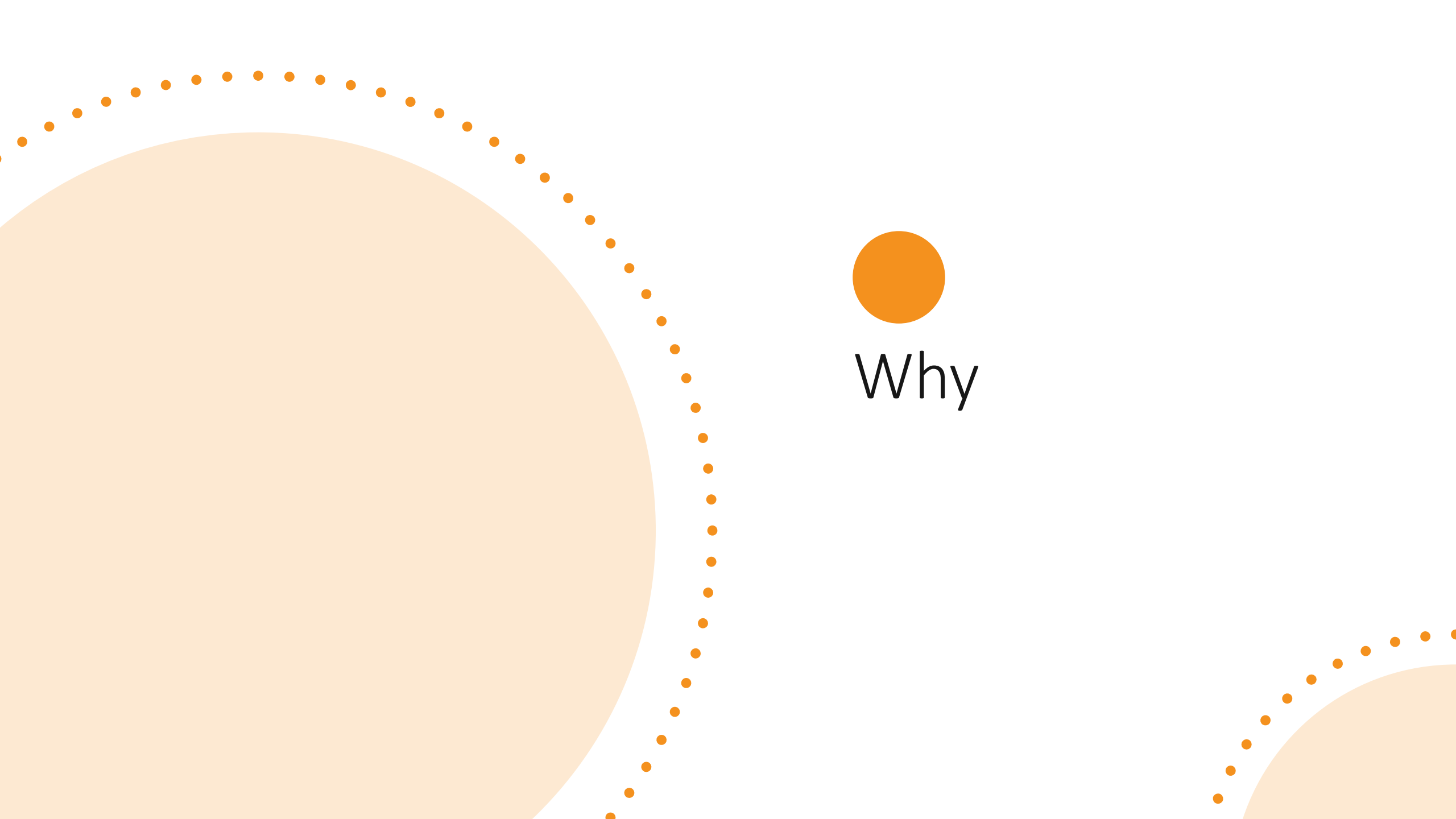
IDENTITY

Source: Cracking the Code by Shakti Butler

Equity Leadership Proposition

Ensuring racial and economic equity for young children including ensuring:

- (a) **Increasing opportunities for children and adults** who care for very young children of color and in poverty and
- (b) **removing barriers to those opportunities** that support optimal growth and development;
- (c) **that resources, burdens, and rewards are distributed in ways that remove and do not exacerbate inequities;** so that those with the greatest challenges are adequately maintained and not further disadvantaged; and
- (d) **Mechanisms are in place to determine who is advantaged and disadvantaged** by initiatives, policies and programs designed to advance equity and dismantle inequities.

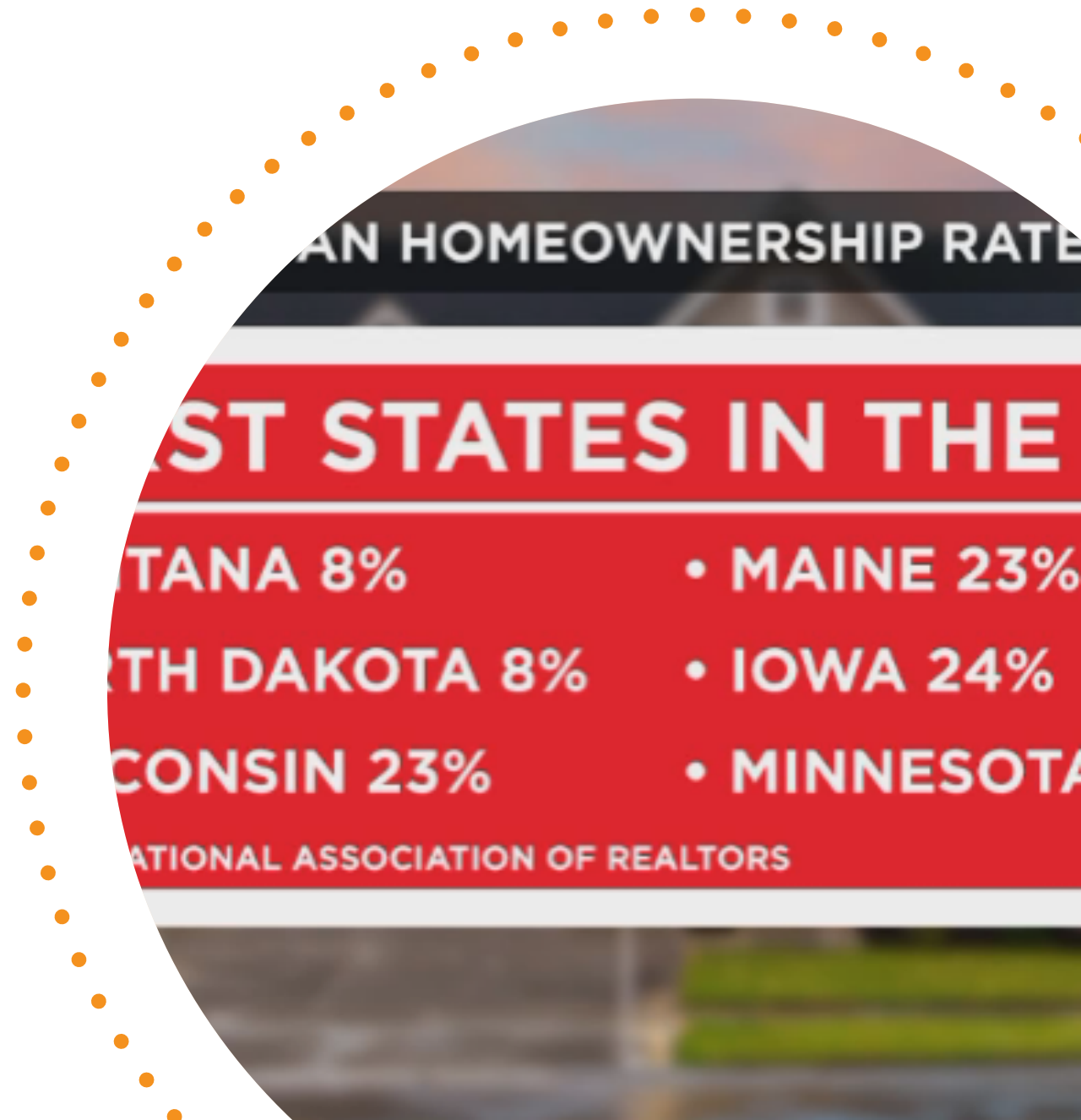


Why

We have to do more,
Wisconsin has nation's 3rd
worst African-American
homeownership rate

Source: Columbus Dispatch

(<https://www.dispatch.com/story/news/2020/09/25/hunger-among-ohio-families-increasing-covid-19-pandemic-persists/3519850001/>)



COVID-19 pandemic changes child care landscape for providers, parents trying to return to work

Source: Wisconsin Public

Radio(https://madison.com/wsj/business/covid-19-pandemic-changes-child-care-landscape-for-providers-parents-trying-to-return-to-work/article_c5cfab9d-af5d-5f05-b0a2-e72c07902f09.html/)



Black, Latino COVID-19 disparities bring attention to broad health inequities

Source: Wisconsin State Journal

https://madison.com/wsj/news/local/health-med-fit/black-latino-covid-19-disparities-bring-attention-to-broad-health-inequities/article_4b5f367c-6b0a-58db-a711-046c4008b66d.html



State Report: Housing, Child Care Shortages Among Challenges For Rural Wisconsin Communities

Source: Wisconsin Public Radio

<https://www.wpr.org/state-report-housing-child-care-shortages-among-challenges-rural-wisconsin-communities>



Facing Uncertainty, Wisconsin Tribe Switches To Indian Health Service For Vaccine Shipments

Source: Wisconsin Public Radio <https://www.wpr.org/facing-uncertainty-wisconsin-tribe-switches-indian-health-service-vaccine-shipments>



Zip Codes and Opportunities: Race and Place

Children and families in urban, suburban, and rural “zip codes” do not have access to the opportunity structures that middle and upper-class children experience. The reduced opportunity structures available to children of color and in poverty shape their lives from birth to end of life.

- Systemic disinvestment in communities;
- Segregation by class and race and ethnicity;
- High poverty - low wealth
- Policies that perpetuate inequity (e.g., not financing needed high quality programs for all children)



OPPORTUNITY STRUCTURES NOT AVAILABLE TO ALL CHILDREN

- Employment: Adequate income, benefits, working conditions
- Environmental safety
- “Good” health
- Maternal and infant well-being; low-mortality
- High-quality nutrition
- High-quality early care and education and K-12 schools
- Post-secondary career prep.
- Technology access and support
- Housing security
- Child welfare involvement
- Criminal justice system fairness
- Freedom from fear

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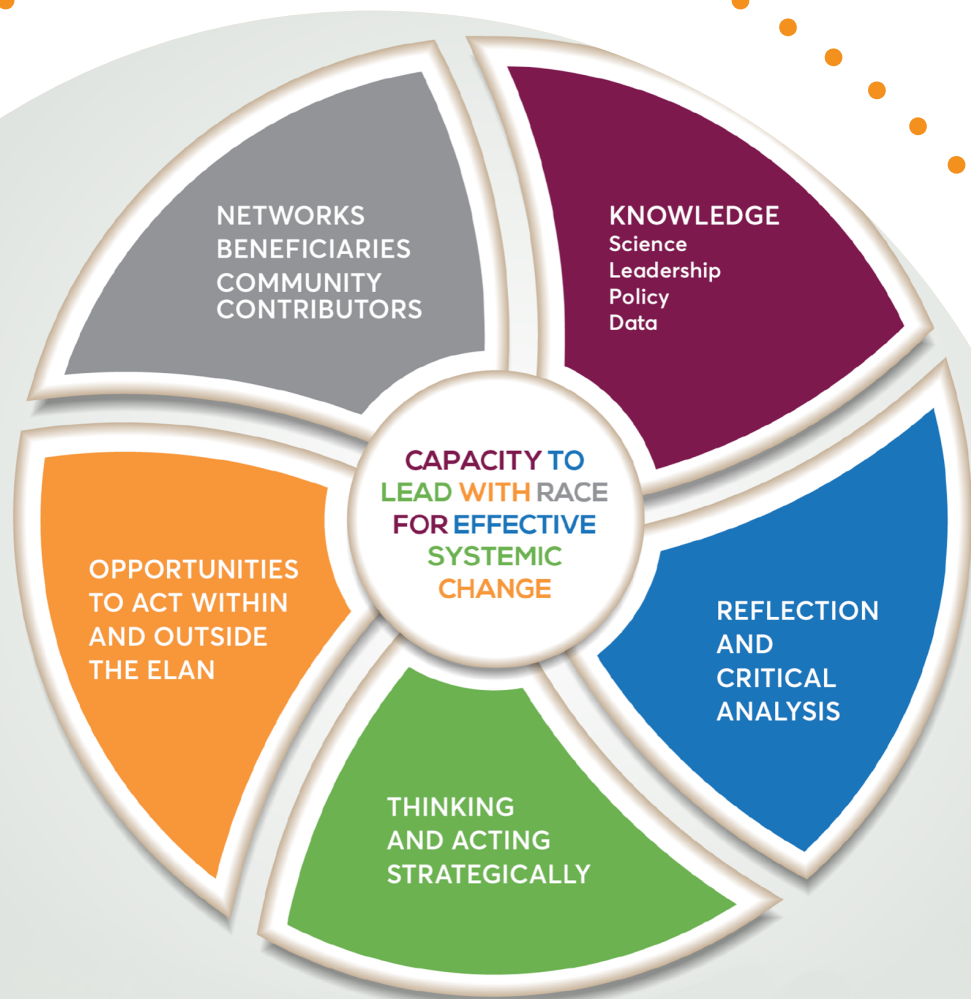
"If you have come to save me, you are wasting your time. But if you have come because somehow your liberation is wrapped up in mine, then let us work together."

Lila Watson
Australian Aboriginal Group



”

What is your Why? How does acting to advance opportunities for racially diverse young children and families benefit your own areas of work?



The Process

Equity & Inclusion Lens: An Equity and Inclusion Lens is a transformative tool used to:

- **Identify systemic and institutionalized racism, bias, disparity and inequality** in practices, policies, procedures and programming
- **Analyze data and information for** racism, bias, disparity and inequity

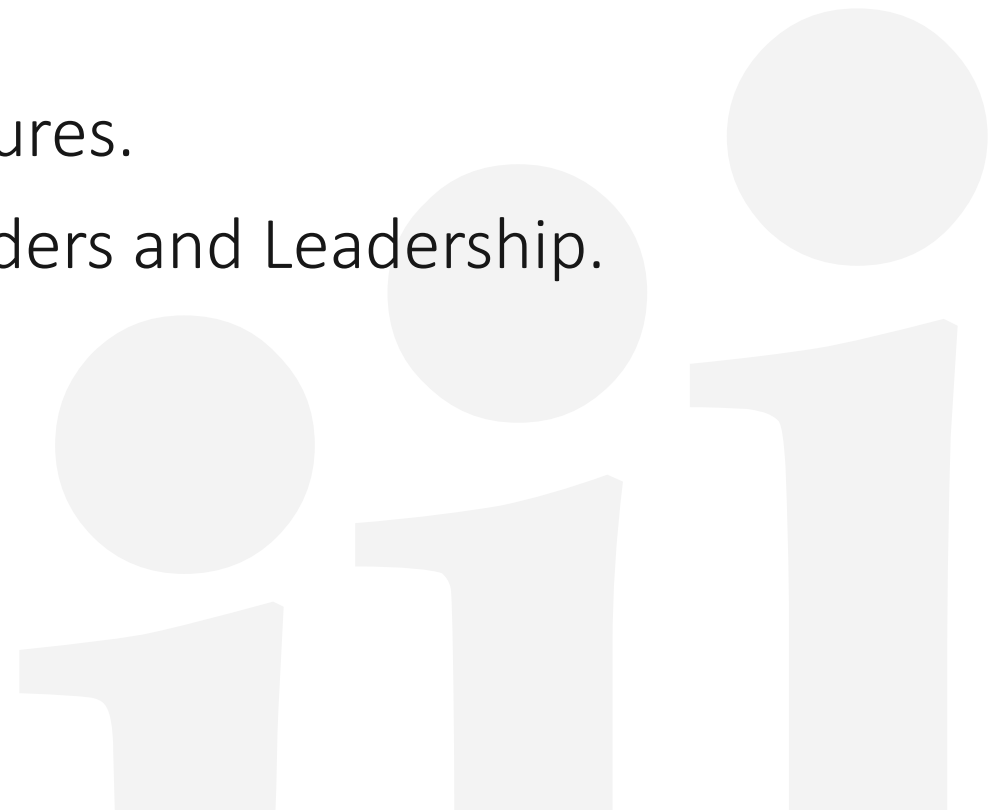
In order to:

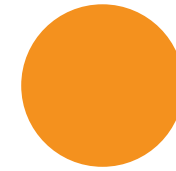
- Move towards more **equitable and inclusive planning, programming, decision-making and resource allocating**
- Ensure that everyone, **particularly members of underrepresented groups** (communities of color, low socioeconomic populations, vulnerable populations, people with disabilities and other disenfranchised peoples) are included as equal participants at every level of policy, procedure and program processes
- Work **to equalize power** in decision-making and opportunities for self-governance

So that: **all Wisconsin children and youth are safe and loved members of thriving families and communities.**

Five Characteristics of the Process for Leading for Equity

- Understanding root causes of inequity in early childhood systems
- Using Data: to plan, to decide, to monitor.
- Taking Action
- Working with people, programs, and structures.
- Roles, Responsibilities and Influence of Leaders and Leadership.

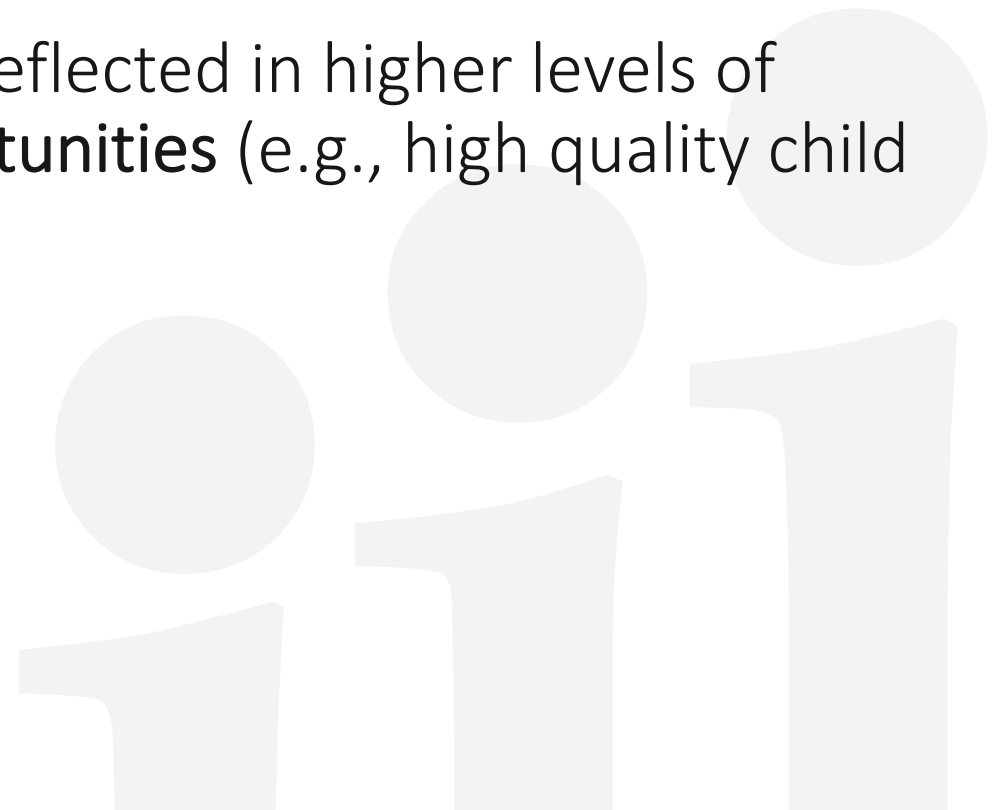




Understanding Root Causes

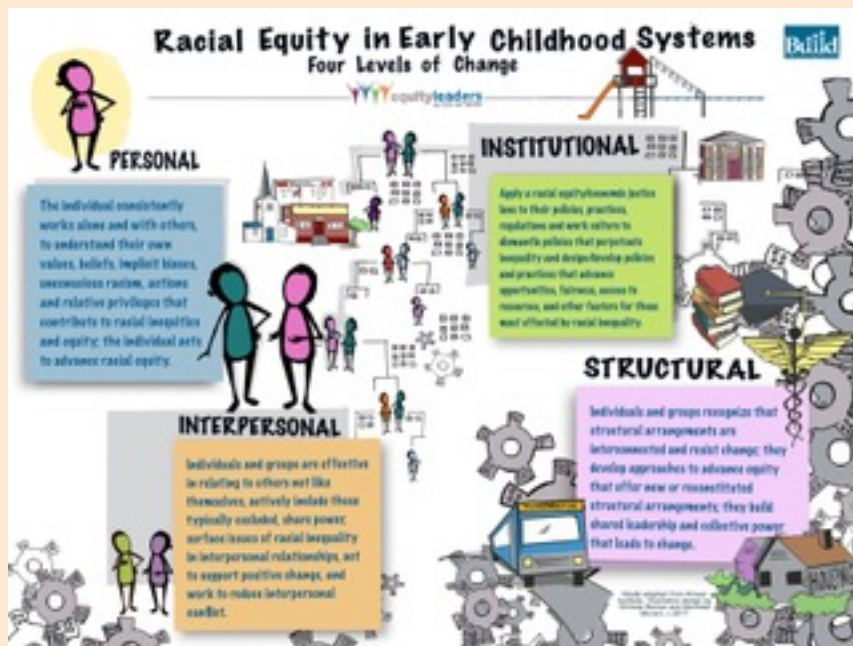
Facing Our Country's History is Essential Racial Equity

- Race is a **social construction** without significant biological significance.
- Inequality is **grounded in historic disenfranchisement** and exclusion of groups, especially Blacks, American Indians, Latinx people, Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders.
- The **legacy of this history** in the present is reflected in higher levels of **poverty, segregation, and barriers to opportunities** (e.g., high quality child care and education, adequate health care).



Interlocking Deep Structural Factors that Support Inequality in Early Childhood Systems

- Wealth gap
- Segregated communities
- Segregated, poorly resourced educational systems
- Opportunity and achievement gaps; educational attainment
- Employment structures: gender inequality in wage structures
- Immigration policies and enforcement
- Health/mental health disparities
- Child welfare policies
- Housing policies and costs – eviction and homelessness
- Criminal justice: mass incarceration, policing
- “Strategic racism”: strategic manipulation of racial animus



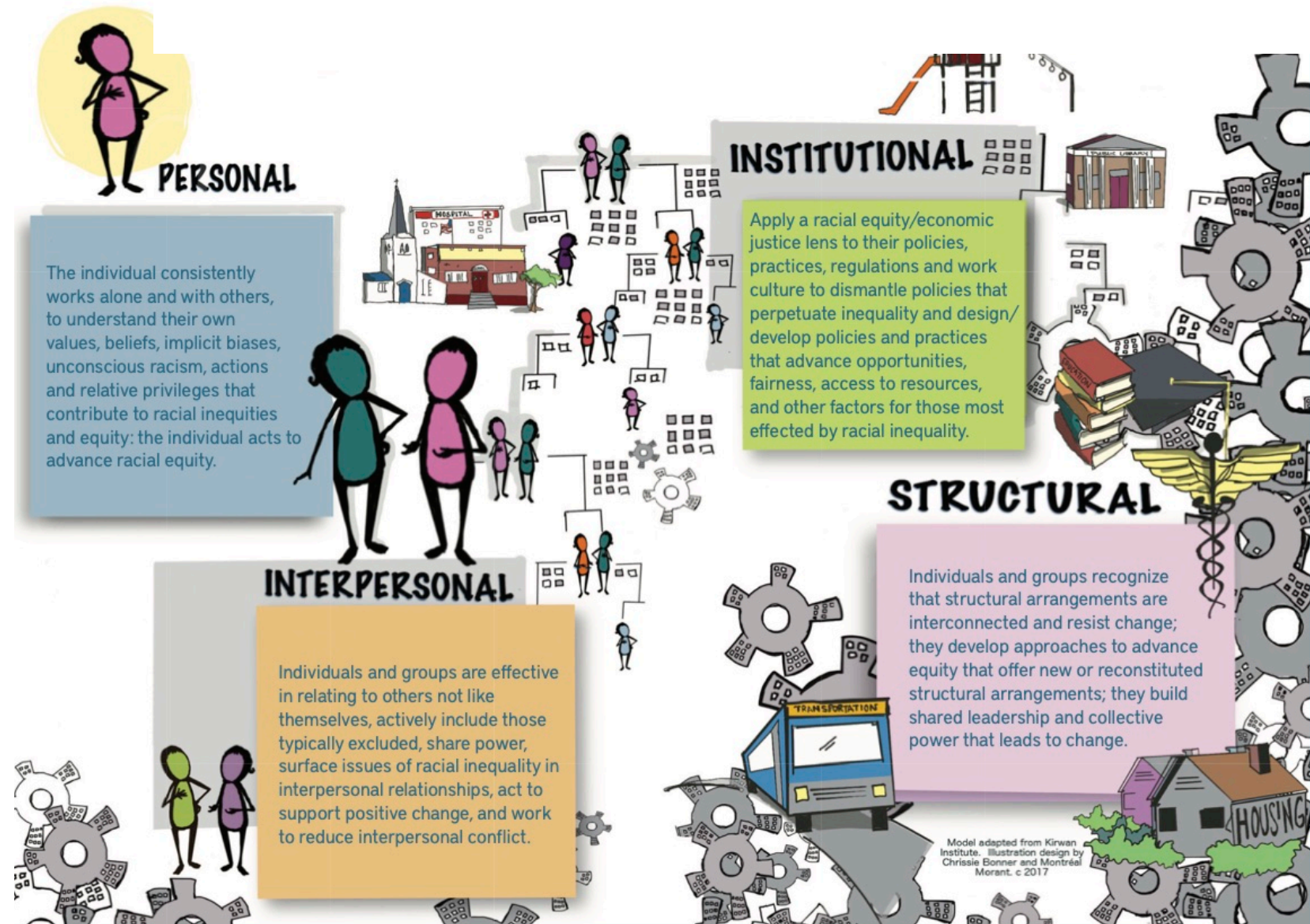
Taking Action

Personal Level of Change

Individuals work along with others to understand their own values, beliefs, implicit biases, unconscious racism, actions and relative privileges that contribute to racial inequities and economic injustice. The individual acts to advance racial and economic equity.

Implications, address:

- Personal history with others
- Racial socialization
- Implicit and explicit bias
- Othering and exclusion
- Belonging and inclusion

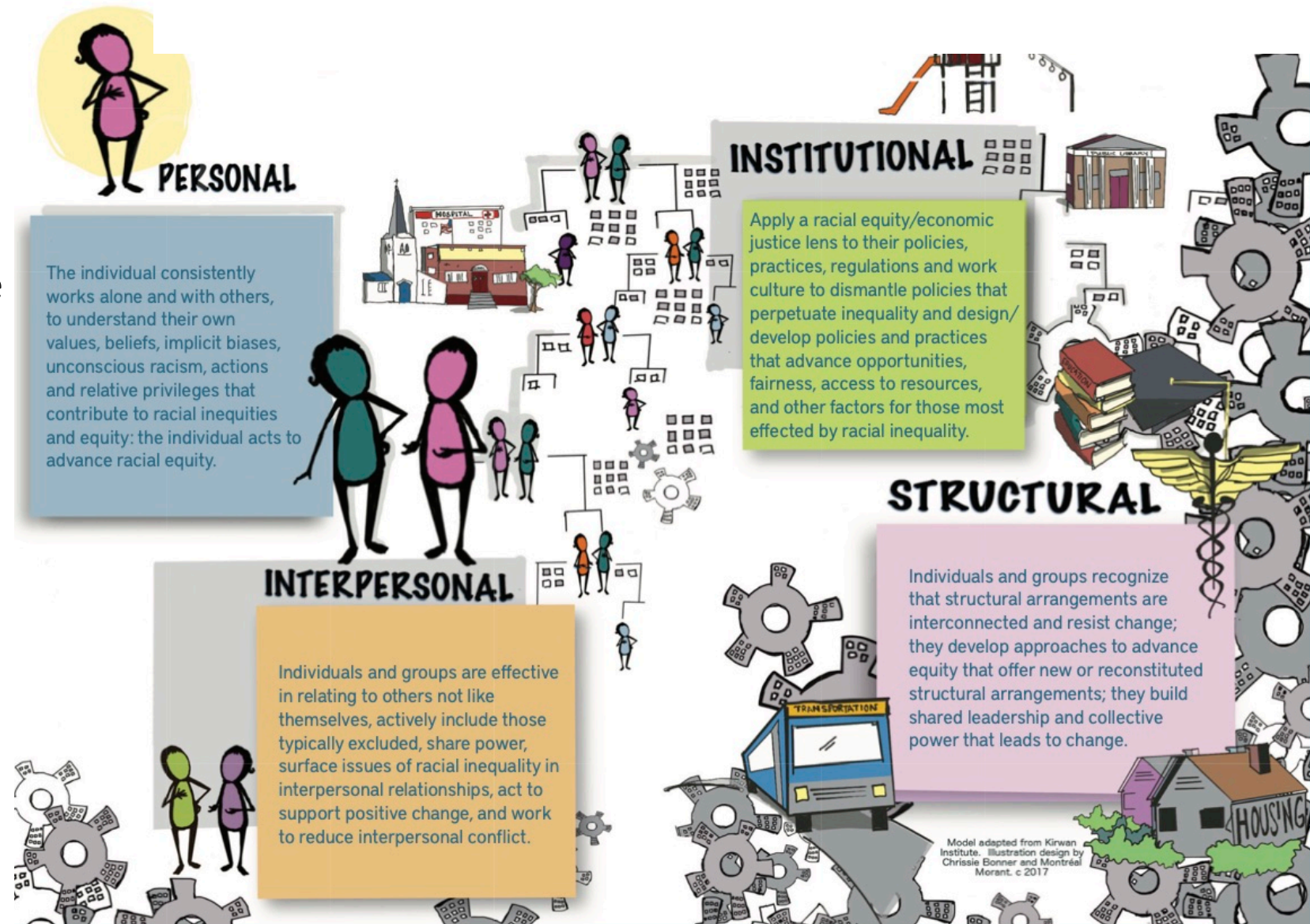


Interpersonal Level of Change

The leader is effective in relating to groups and individuals, such as parents and guardians, community leaders not like themselves, actively including those typically excluded, willing to share power, able to surface issues of racial and economic inequality in interpersonal relationships, actively supportive of change, and working to reduce interpersonal conflict and for increased inclusion and understanding.

Implications:

- Transformational engagement
- Strength perspectives



Institutional

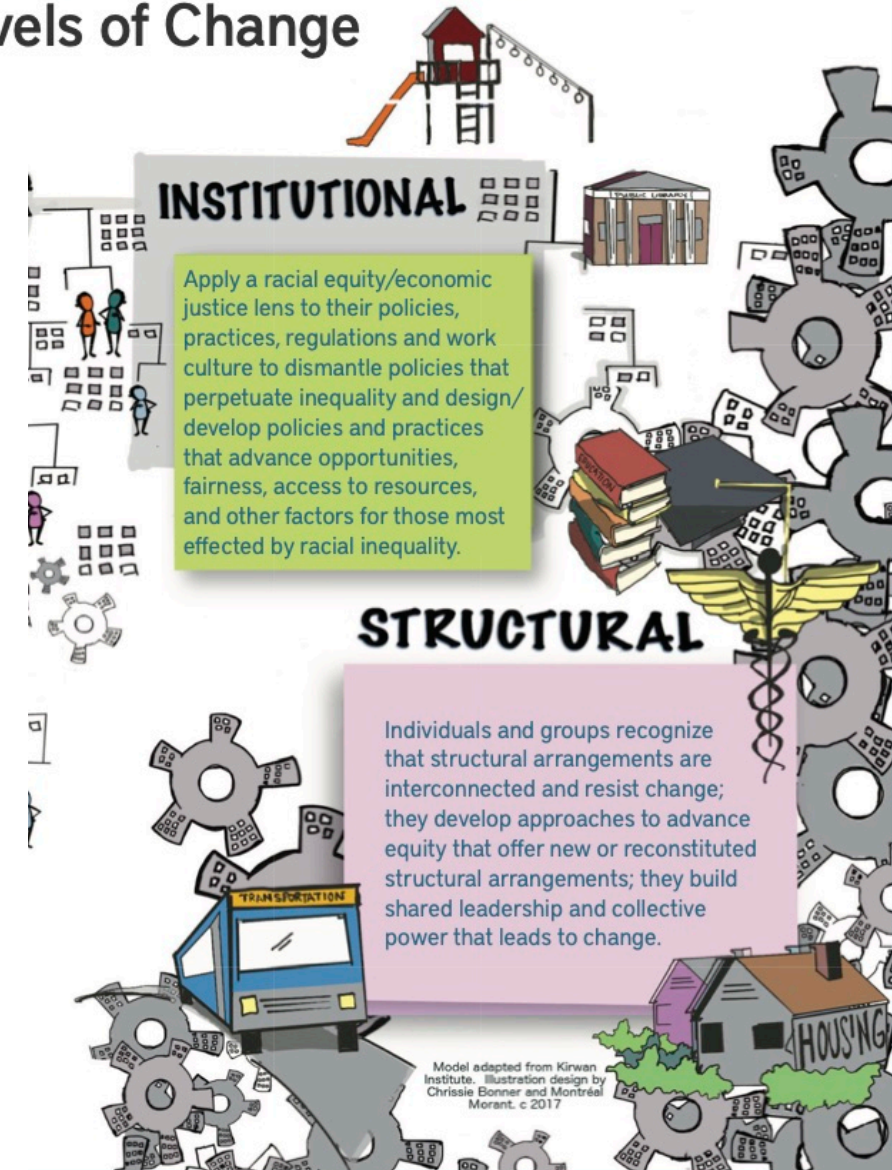
Apply a racial equity and economic justice lens to their policies, practices, regulations and work culture to dismantle those that perpetuate inequality, and design and development policies and practices that advance opportunities, fairness, access to resources, and other factors for those most effected by racial and economic inequality

Racial Equity in Early Childhood Systems

Four Levels of Change

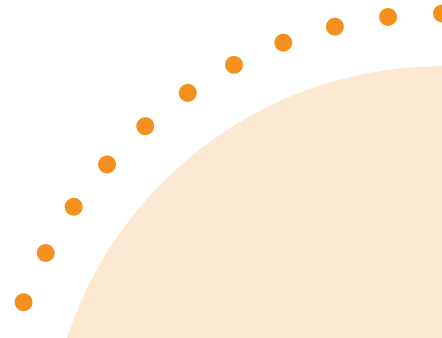
Structural

Individuals and groups recognize that structural arrangements are interconnected and resist change, they develop approaches to advance equity that offer new or reconstituted structural arrangements, they build shared leadership, and collective power that leads change.





Opportunities to Act



The Curb-Cut Effect

Laws and programs designed to benefit vulnerable groups, such as the disabled or people of color, often end up benefiting all of society.

By **Angela Glover Blackwell**

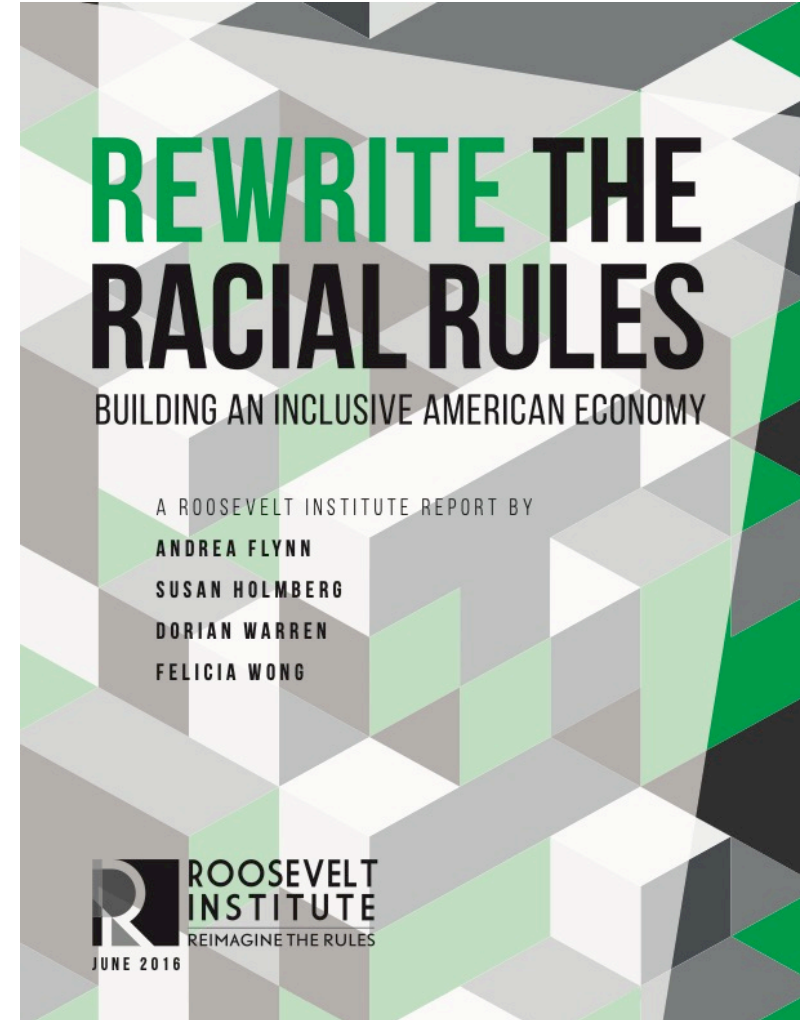
Winter 2017



Roosevelt Institute article, *Rewrite Racial Rules*

Roosevelt Institute article, *Rewrite Racial Rules*, which can be found here:

<http://rooseveltinstitute.org/rewrite-racial-rules-building-inclusive-american-economy/>



Federal-Tribal Relationship/Policy

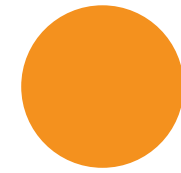
Policy

- International Sovereign to international Sovereign
- Removal
- Reservation
- Assimilation
- Self Rule
- Termination (assimilation)
- Self Determination
- Self Governance

Relationship

- Protectorate
- Government to Government and trust
- Guardianship
- Renewal of Government to Government
- Termination of trust
- Renewal of Government
- Government to Government and trust

Source: <https://bioneers.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/Wilkins2011.pdf>



Using Data

Use data quantitative data to get you started

Multiple sources

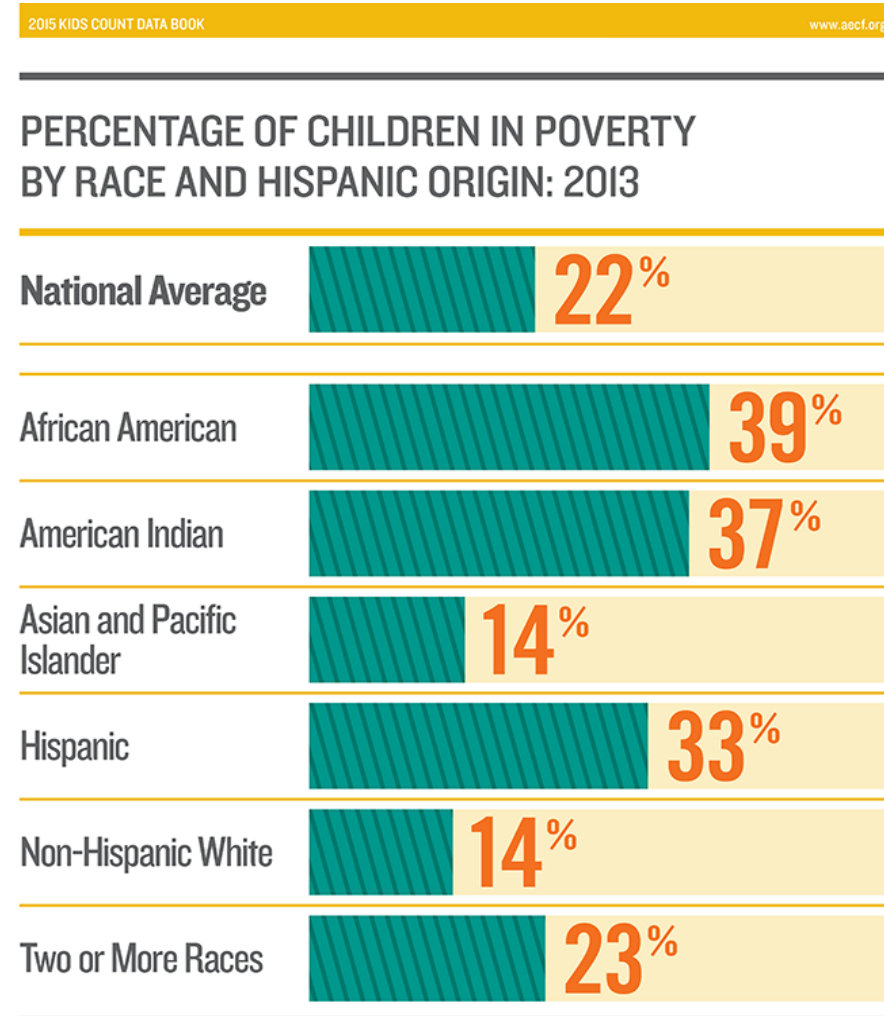
- State
- Local
- Population level
- Program/Services Delivery (health, early learning, economic)

Multiple angles (economic, health, housing)

- Young child healthy development
- School readiness and success
- Children have access to healthy food
- Young children are safe
- Healthy and economically secure families
- Community conditions

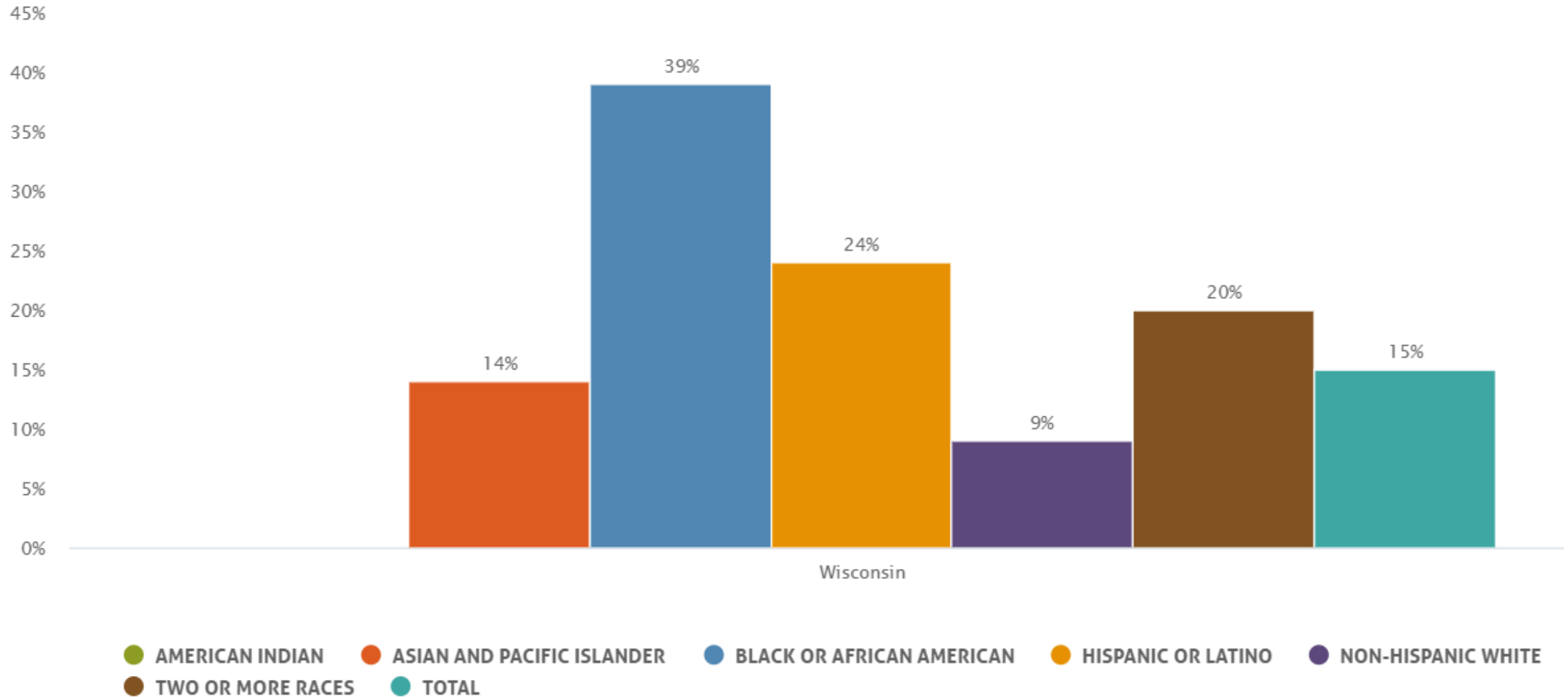
Multiple views

- Disaggregate race, geography
- Sort by states, counties, cities, neighborhoods or towns



SOURCE U.S. Census Bureau, 2013 American Community Survey.

Young Children (0-5) in poverty by race and ethnicity in Wisconsin (2015)



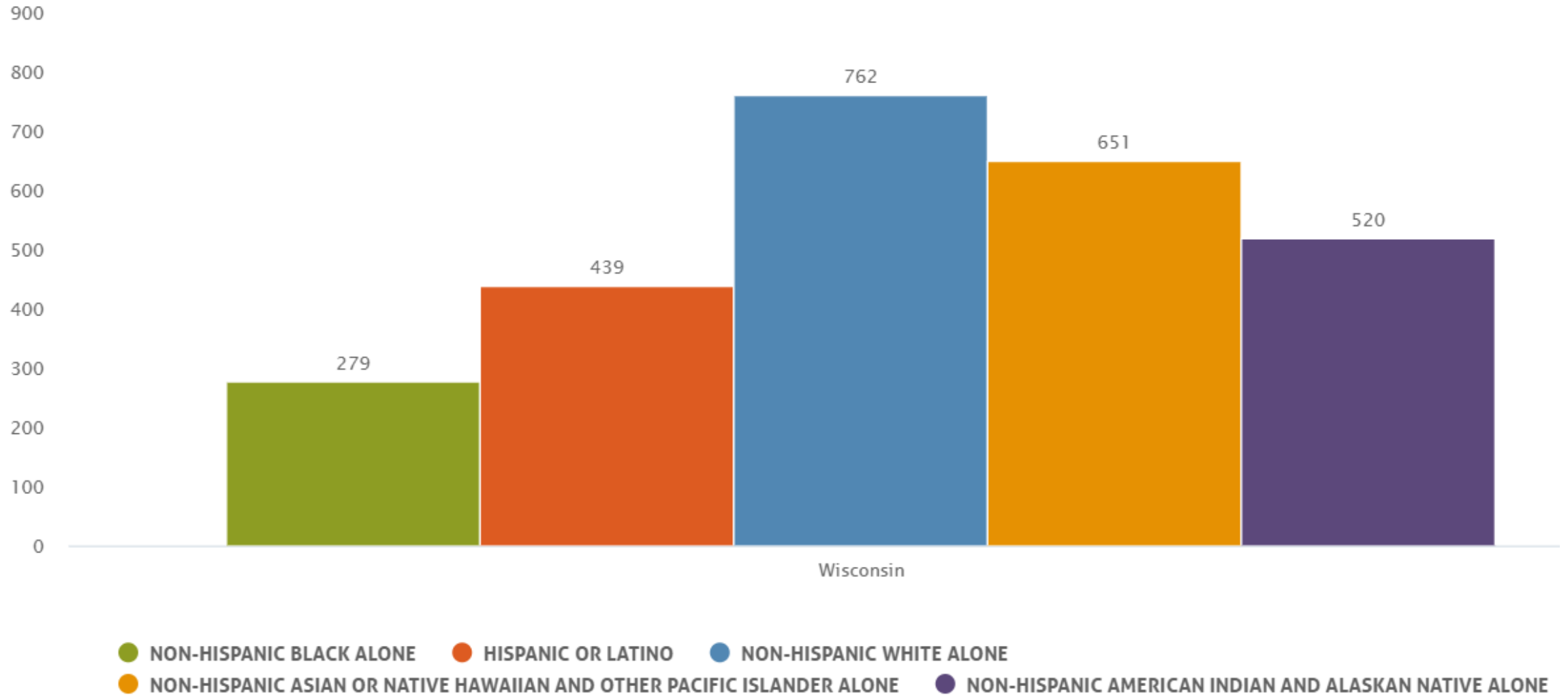
Data Source: Population Reference Bureau, analysis of data from the U.S. Census Bureau, 2005, 2008, 2010, and 2013 through 2019 American Community Survey. KIDS COUNT Data Center

2017 RACE FOR RESULTS INDEX

The Annie E. Casey Foundation has developed the Race for Results Index (value is between 0 and 1,000), which compares how children are progressing on key milestones across racial and ethnic groups at the national and state levels. The index is based on 12 indicators that measure a child's success in each stage of life, from birth to adulthood.

- Babies born at normal birthweight
- Children ages 3 to 5 enrolled in nursery school, preschool or kindergarten
- Fourth graders who scored at or above proficient in reading
- Eighth graders who scored at or above proficient in math
- Females ages 15 to 19 who delay childbearing until adulthood
- High school students graduating on time
- Young adults ages 19 to 26 who are in school or working
- Young adults ages 25 to 29 who have completed an associate's degree or higher
- Children birth to 17 who live with a householder who has at least a high school diploma
- Children birth to 17 who live in two-parent families
- Children birth to 17 who live in families with incomes at or above 200 percent of poverty
- Children birth to 17 who live in low-poverty areas (poverty <20 percent)

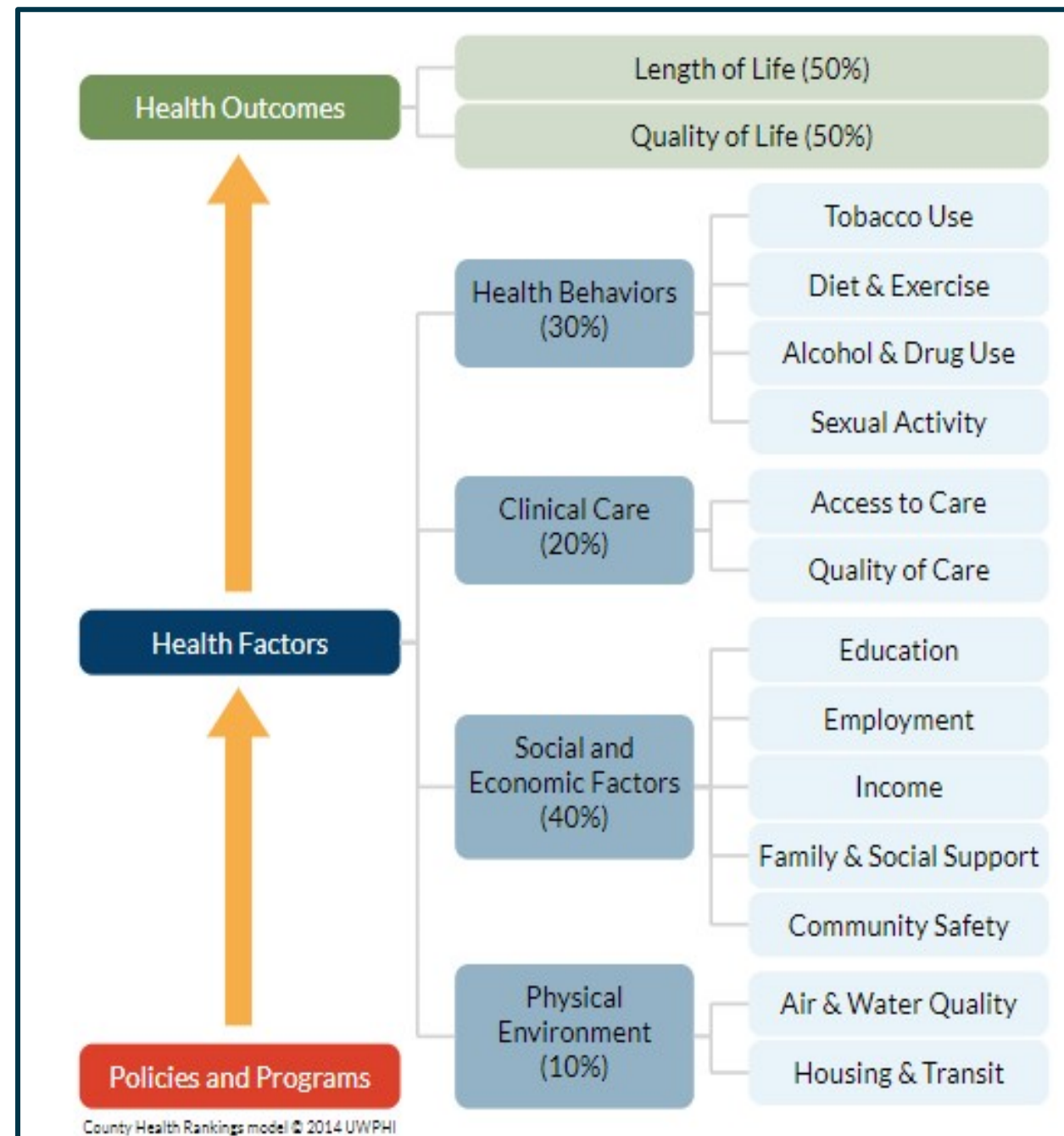
Race for Results: Wisconsin (2017)



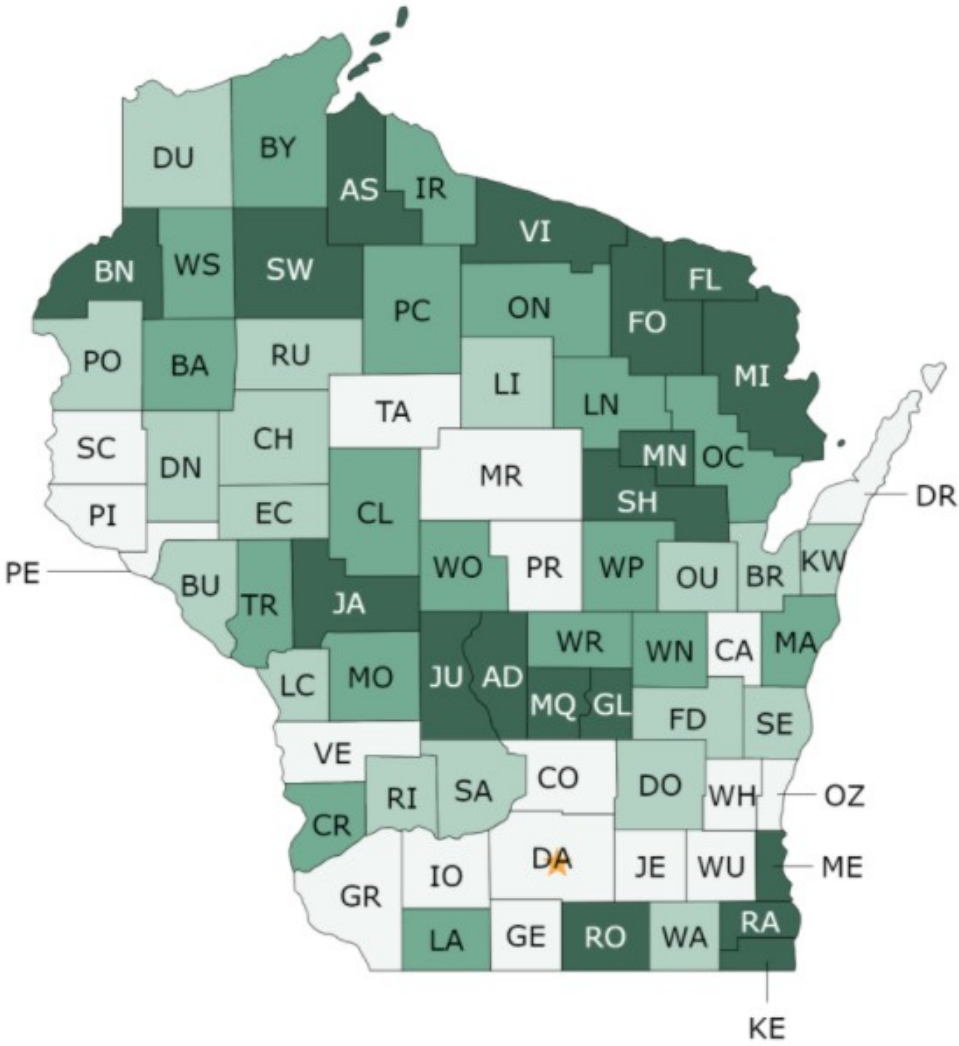
Source: National KIDS COUNT

County Health Rankings & Roadmaps

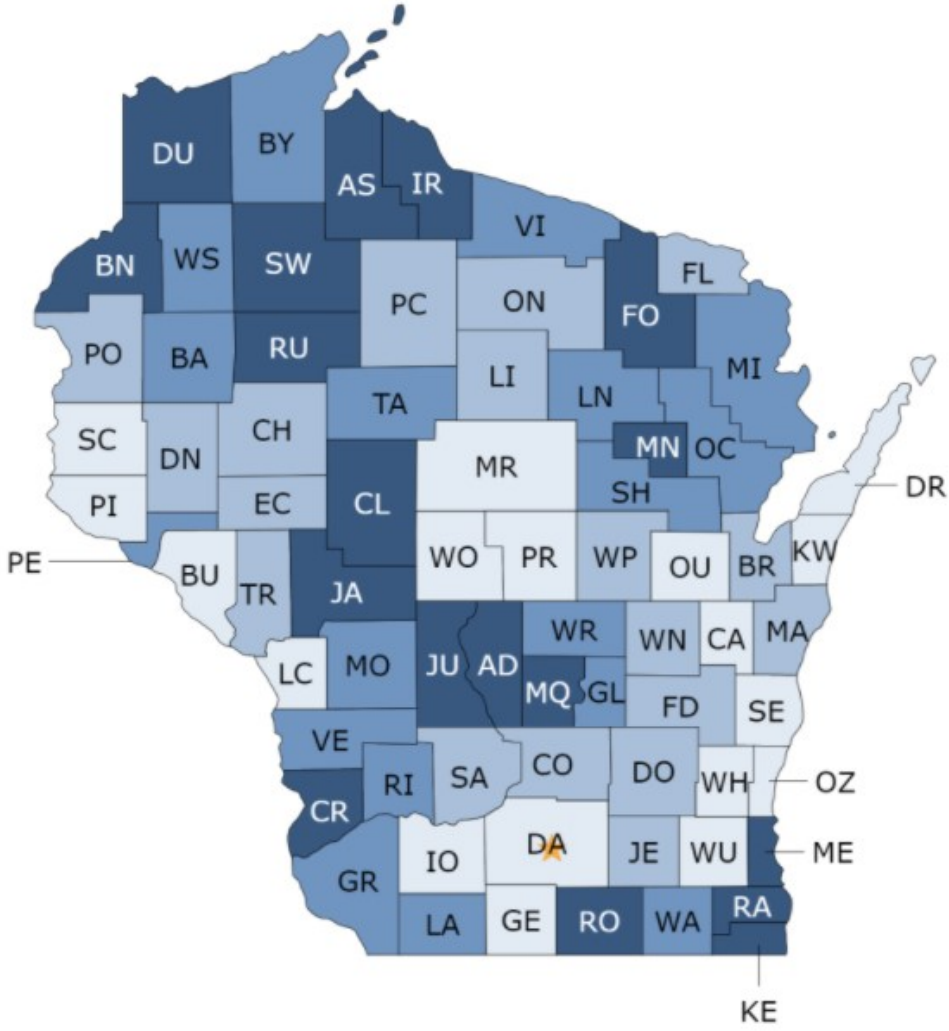
- Standardizing each measure
- Calculating the ranks based on weights
- The county with the best health gets a rank of #1 for that state.



Wisconsin Health Outcome Ranking



Wisconsin Health Factor Ranking



Health Outcome Ranks 1 to 18 19 to 36 37 to 54 55 to 72 Health Factor Ranks 1 to 18 19 to 36 37 to 54 55 to 72

Wisconsin County Health Ranking (2020)

Counties ranked at the
lowest in health outcomes
and health factors

	Factors	Outcomes
Rock	63	65
Clark	64	46
Kenosha	65	62
Racine	66	63
Burnett	67	56
Sawyer	68	69
Adams	69	68
Forest	70	70
Milwaukee	71	71
Menominee	72	72

Opportunity Index

This annual report by Opportunity Nation gives a grade ranging from A+ to F.

15 lowest graded counties in Wisconsin

Douglas County	C+
Jackson County	C+
Juneau County	C+
Kenosha County	C+
Langlade County	C+
Monroe County	C+
Racine County	C+
Rock County	C+
Sawyer County	C+
Vernon County	C+
Burnett County	C
Clark County	C
Marquette County	C
Adams County	C-
Milwaukee County	C-

Economy

- Jobs, wages, poverty, income inequality, access to banking services, affordable housing, broadband internet subscription

Education

- Preschool enrollment, high school graduation, postsecondary education

Health

- Low birth weight, health insurance coverage, deaths related to alcohol/drug use and suicide

Community

- Voter registration, youth disconnection, violent crime, access to primary health care, access to healthy food, incarceration

Wisconsin Data Summary

	County Health Ranking Factors	County Health Ranking Outcomes	Opportunity Index Grade	% Black	% American Indian & Alaska Native	% Asian	% Native Hawaiian/ Other Pacific Islander	% Hispanic	% Non-Hispanic White
Langlade	53	44	C+	1.1	0.02	0.50	-	2.0	93.8
Marquette	62	64	C	0.6	0.9	0.7	0.0	3.7	93.1
Rock	63	65	C+	4.9	0.5	1.4	0.1	8.9	82.5
Clark	64	46	C	0.5	0.8	0.5	0.1	4.8	92.8
Kenosha	65	62	C+	6.9	0.7	1.7	0.1	13.4	75.6
Racine	66	63	C+	11.3	0.7	1.4	0.1	13.4	71.7
Burnett	67	56	C	0.8	4.7	0.5	0.1	2.0	90.2
Sawyer	68	69	C+	0.6	18.0	0.4	-	2.8	76.5
Adams	69	68	C-	3.0	1.2	0.5	0.0	4.2	90.3
Forest	70	70	No grade avail.	1.2	15.2	0.4	0.1	2.3	78.7
Milwaukee	71	71	C-	26.2	0.1	4.7	0.0	15.4	51.0
Menominee	72	72	No grade avail.	0.8	81.3	3.0	-	6.0	11.1
WISCONSIN				6.4	1.2	3.0	0.1	6.9	81.1

Source of Race and Ethnicity Data: 2018 Census Population estimates. Compiled by the County Health Rankings.

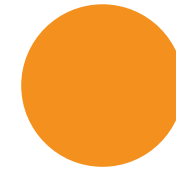
Discussion

- Which communities have the least investment in infrastructure to be able to do business with the state?
- Which communities or groups of people do not directly have access or benefit from existing state policies programs and services?

Data and the Process for Leading for Equity

Use data in planning, decision making and monitoring progress and effectiveness in advancing equity and child and family well-being.

- Data can be **quantitative and qualitative** (statistics and measures of well-being, family focus group data, interviews)
- Data is used to tell us **who is benefiting and not benefiting** from our early childhood policies, practices and systems.
- Data can inform the **identification of root causes** or explanations about disparate outcome of and access to systems, policies, practice.
- Data can work to **uncover strategies or actions** to address those root causes.
- Data is used to **continually monitor the impact of those strategies** across time. **Intended and unintended** impacts.



Beneficiary and Community Contributor Voice

Making Inequity in Early Childhood Systems Visible: Start an Intentional Process



Who are Beneficiaries?

- Children
- Families
- Workforce
- Providers
- Community leaders
- Local policy leaders

Why Support Connection to Those We Intend to Benefit?

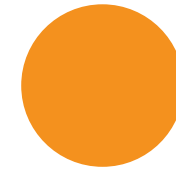
- Leaders often are far from those who they intend to benefit.
- Understanding “lived experience” of services, programs and initiatives is essential for continuous improvement.
- Voices narrow as you move farther from service delivery.
- Addressing equity requires the increase of many and varied opportunities.
- Leaders’ own stories often drive their passion.
- Families, children and communities are not all situated the same.
- Our social networks are often not diverse.

Beneficiary Voice

- To listen, understand, and learn about families' goals for their young children, providers' goals for their work with young children, services that work or don't work well, services that exist that they can't access, and where services and opportunities which support young children's growth and development just don't exist.
- To develop experiences with populations and groups that experience racial inequities and disparities, increasing the focus on institutional and structural barriers to achieving equitable outcomes for children and their families.
- To support exploration of how historically and today, individuals and communities have fought back, resisted, and organized for self-determination, inclusion, and fairness.
- To apply lessons learned to our own practice in order to ensure ongoing communication with children and families, and providers that are served by advocacy work.

Feedback Loops

- **Intentionally seek input directly from beneficiaries** – the families of young children who are intended to benefit from the programs and services offered.
- **Engage in a cycle of improvement over time.** A key strategy is listening and getting a more accurate, deeper understanding each time you present back to the community what the team heard and saw at the last visit.
- **Share the challenges that your cross-sector team could not respond to and why,** such as funding, eligibility, timeframes for change, area of responsibility, e.g., local vs. state, etc.
- **Be honest about timelines** and the pace at which government moves.



People, Programs and Structures

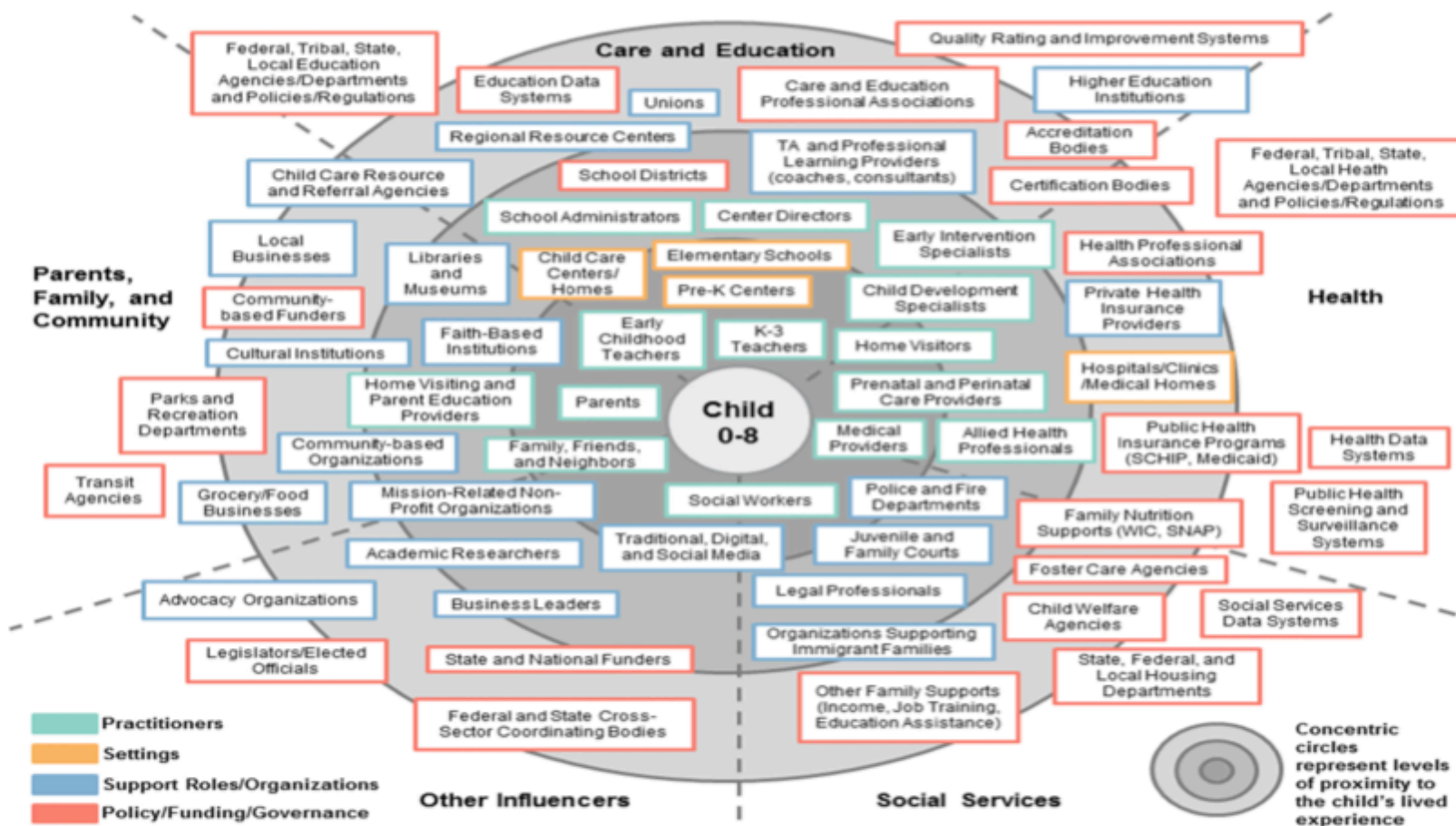
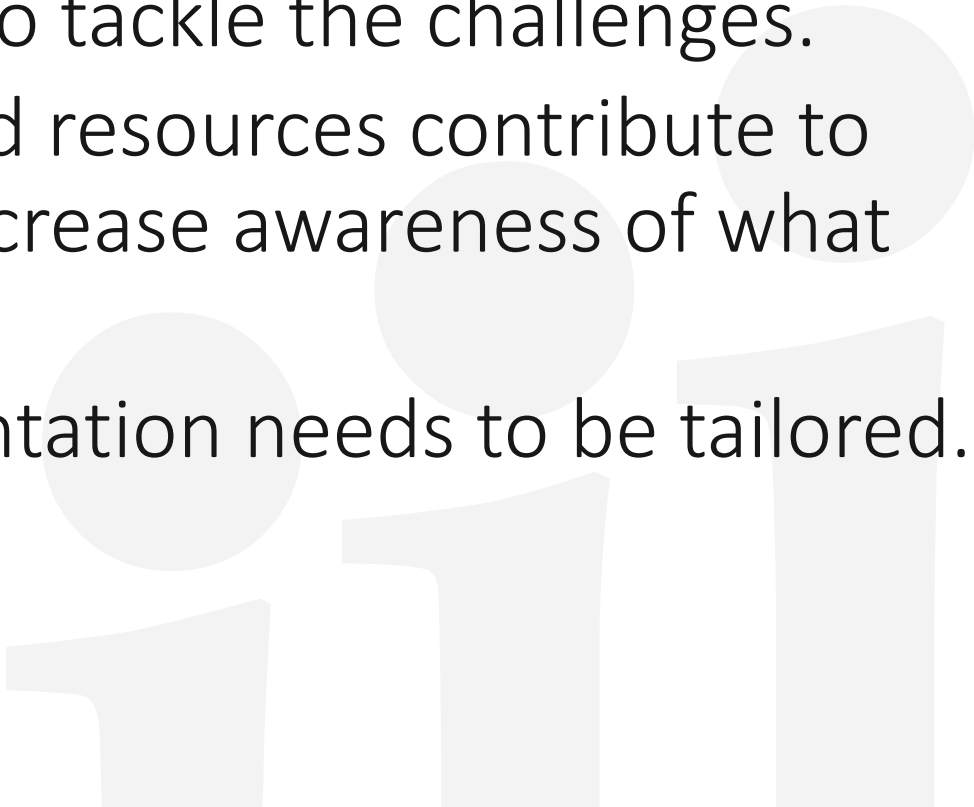


FIGURE 1-1 The complex landscape that affects children ages 0-8.

Cross Sector Leaders

- Can't reduce inequities as a single leader alone—the intersecting ways inequities exists.
 - Multiple ways of hearing the voices.
 - Multiple methods and approaches to tackle the challenges.
 - Different expertise, experiences, and resources contribute to the changes that are needed and increase awareness of what exists.
 - Policy can be created, but implementation needs to be tailored.
- 



Leaders and Leadership

Critical Racial Equity Behaviors of Early Childhood Systems Leaders

- Leaders **understand** the historical legacy and current reality of racism and exclusion and work to build systems that are anti-racist, equitable, and inclusive.
- Leader's **act** identifying and using strategies and best practices to disrupt racially inequitable early childhood systems and to eliminate disparities and disproportionality.
- Leaders **work across systems** to disrupt systemic and structural inequities and to build alignment, support child development, and family well-being.
- Leaders intentionally **work with** and listen to the experiences and perspectives of those most effected by policies and programs to advance equity.

Source: System leaders' characteristics resources have been developed by The BUILD Initiative through the leadership of Sherri Killins Stewart Ed.D., Aisha Ray Ph.D, and Michelle Stover Wright M.S. (version 3)

Key Areas of Inquiry :

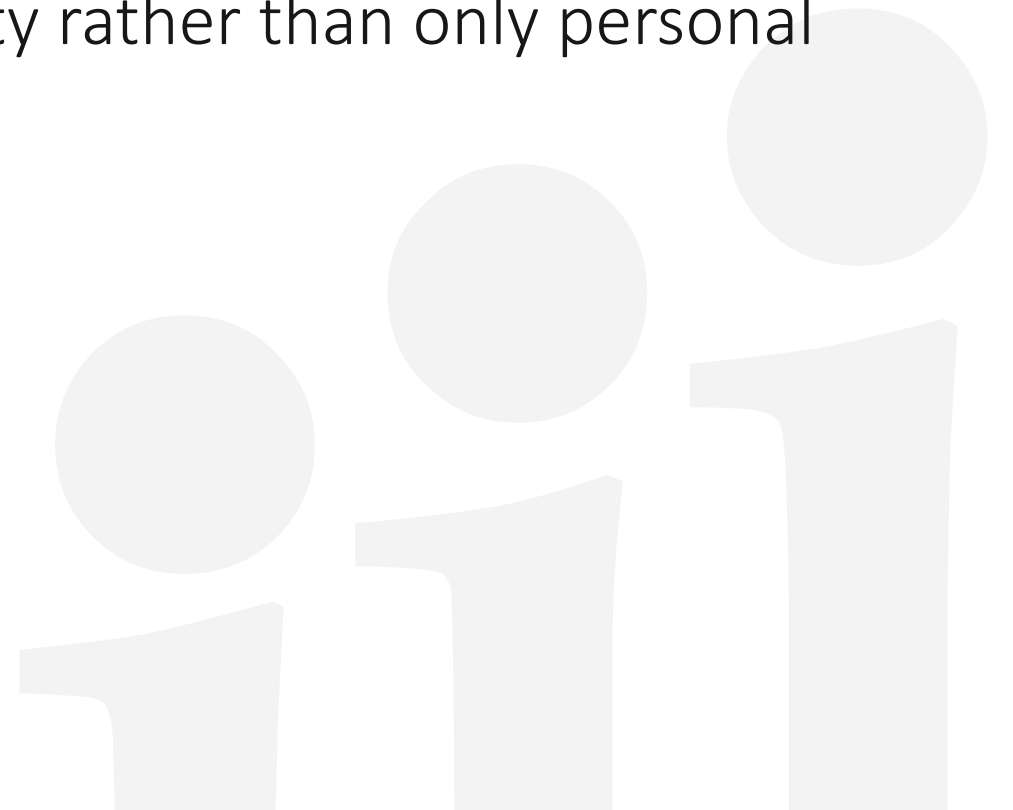
- In my work and responsibilities **who is and is not benefiting** from my state's/county's/organization's policies and programs?
- As a leader, what actions can I take to **intentionally and consistently** include those furthest from opportunity in my/our work?
- **Do I intentionally engage those furthest from opportunity** in understanding data, quantitative and qualitative, to advance shared equity goals?

How to Take Action?

- **Interpretation of the Policy**
 - Clarification of current policy, rules, and regulations.
 - Enforcement of existing policy to ensure consistent implementation across the state.
 - Review of current investments.
- **Modifications of Policy**
 - Amendment to existing policy, rules, and regulations.
 - Development of new rules and regulations.
 - Modifications to existing resources to meet objectives.
- **Modifications of Practices**
 - Changes to where and how services are delivered.
 - Changes to how services are monitored.
 - Quality improvements of services.
- **Workforce/Leadership (public/private)**
 - Capacity, e.g. skills, knowledge, abilities and/or number of actual staff.
 - Training and professional development.
 - Bias, cultural and linguistic competencies.
 - Diversity of workforce and leadership.
- **New or Modification of Legislation (statutes)**

Leaders

- Address racial inequality explicitly but not necessarily exclusively
- Focus on impacts rather than intentions
- Focus on structural and institutional equality rather than only personal prejudice
- Make equity an ongoing priority



”

What are opportunities and barriers to modifying the policies, practices, legislation and workforce which you are responsible for be interpreted, modified, or tailored to benefit families with young children and their communities?



What Families and Providers Say

What you heard...

- “Since **we don't qualify for childcare assistance**, because with our careers, we make too much money. But it's just enough money to pay for childcare. I mean, we have a mortgage and other bills to worry about too, and another child.” – Rural white caregiver
- “You see these single parents or families from low-income, where **they're really struggling**. They're really, really struggling to make these payments because they're trying to balance between, okay, if I make this payment, right, my children are going to starve tonight. **So now I'm going to have to not make this payment so that I can pay for our electricity bill**, so our, you know, electricity or water doesn't get shut off or our heat doesn't get shut off, or I can afford formula for my child or what not.” – Hmong provider
- “The system process almost feels disrespectful. I know our elders have great stories and knowledge, **but due to regulations how can I ask them for a background check and not disrespect them?**” – Tribal provider

What are Responsive Policy, Practice or Program Options

- Wages for Child Care Providers
- Percent of Income contribution for Child Care
- Single point of contact for services
- Front Line Workforce
- Practice of supervision of adults without background checks

More from families and caregivers

- “I have **my parents watch my kids**. Sometimes my sister does too because we live together. I’m lucky if I can even compensate my parents. Oftentimes I can’t afford to pay them, and it’s like paying for household expenses is perceived as compensation. Many Hmong **families live in intergenerational** households – it’s like a survival means because that’s how you keep costs low, even though you have a lot of bills.... We’ve just found certain ways to help ourselves to live within our means.” – Hmong caregiver
- “I think when **Black women speak, like we're not taken seriously....** So it's like when you say something, they kind of make little of it. So it's like I'm saying my child can't do this, and they're like, well, probably not really. Like... it's like, ‘She doesn't really know what she's talking about. I know better.’ It's like you think that you know better because you're white. **But like you don't know what's best for my child.**” – Black caregiver
- Policy and Practice Considerations
- What informal supports e.g., libraries and museums are available to support children's, growth and development?
- How are we building relationship with and listening to and responding to communities different than ourselves?

Four Frames that Perpetuate Racial Inequity

- **Equal opportunity:** employment, education, and wealth accumulation available to all; race is no longer a factor. Minimizing or denying the existence of on-going racial disparities. (Minimizing)
- **Personal responsibility and individualism:** people have control regardless of social position; individual behaviors and choices determine outcomes. Blaming the existence of disparities, when they are acknowledged, on pathologies in non-White groups and communities rather than on structural factors that privilege Whites. (Blaming)
- **Natural Preference:** asserting that factors central to racial privilege and racism (e.g., segregation) are merely normal reflections of each groups' preference to be with "their own kind." (Privilege)
- **Meritocracy:** resources and opportunities are distributed according to talent, effort and achievement, rather than wealth or privilege. Supporting the ideals of equality and meritocracy, while refusing to recognize that the playing field is not level for all in the society (Bonilla-Silva, 2014). (Ideals of Equality)

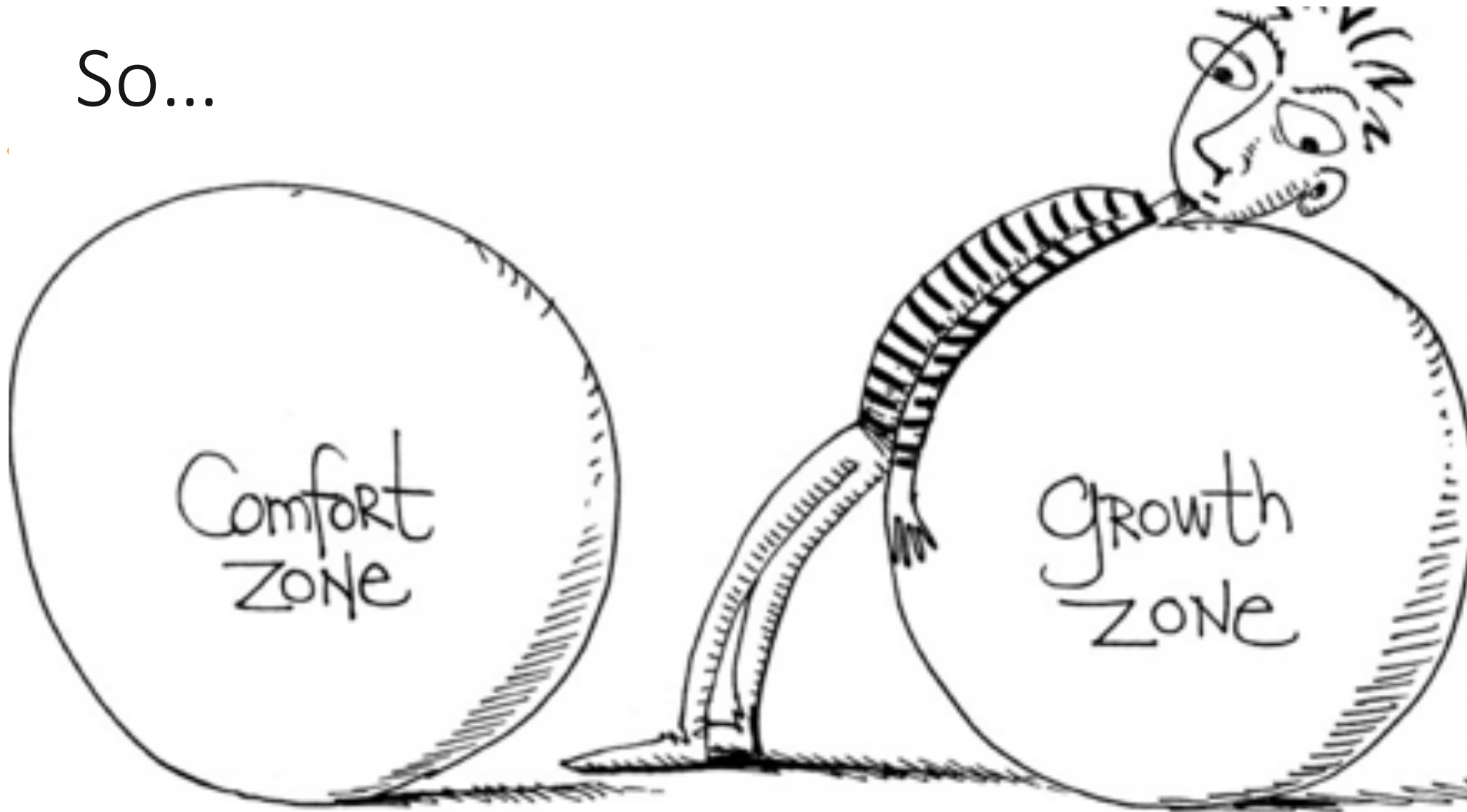
Sources: Leadership and Race How to Develop Leadership and Contributes to Racial Justice July 2010; Racism without Racist Color -Blind Racism and the Persistence of Racial Inequity in American, Eduardo Bonilla-Silva

Leading with Race Requires Systems Leadership

While many have a vision for equitable systems or equity in their own work efforts, achieving these goals requires:

- **Deep commitment** to the work of racial equity.
- **Strong communication skills.**
- Recognizing that problems are both “**out there**” and “**in here**”—self awareness of being part of the solution and the problem.
- **Building and sustaining relationships**, allowing collective work and wisdom to blossom, attention to process.
- **Practice, practice, fail, reassess, practice, practice....learn.**
- **Use of tools**, e.g., systems mapping, inquiry, consultancy, etc.
- **Open boundaries**, tables and spaces to “outsiders”—open dialogue and work.
- **Build networks.**

So...



Lean...

Resources

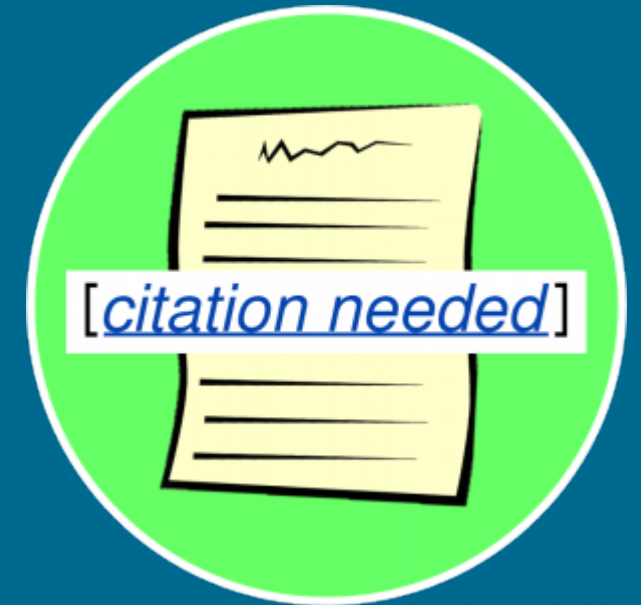
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We invite you to use this PowerPoint or any of its slides in your racial equity work. If you do use any of these materials, we only ask that you cite the source in the following way:

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Thank You



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